

that ducal house—odd coincidence! And what a beautiful object the marble arch would be from the windows, at the north end of Park-lane—very odd coincidence! Yet, Sir, is that which is offensive to public good taste and public sound judgment to be permitted to be formed,—public opinion to be mocked, laughed at, and off-handedly, against them, the private whims and fancies of those in office to be carried out—all remonstrance to be pook-pooled? Further, Sir, will the public tolerate the needless, and worse than wasteful, expenditure of many thousands which will be required of the public money, if the said marble arch be placed at Cumberland-gate. One gate being insufficient for the service of that thoroughfare at that entrance; and as the arch must, from the nature of its construction, either stand alone or form a centre, it follows that lateral gates must be raised of adequate architectural importance to correspond with the marble structure. An excuse may be, that her Majesty should pass under a series of arches in her passage from the palace to the dingy entrance of the Great Western Railway; but so truly ridiculous would the position be at the very end of the park, that should it be perpetrated, I can contemplate nothing less than, in similarity with the southern corner, they would throw the duke of the northern *porte* a pretty somersault, and place him on a cockhorse, too, and so complete the summit of the absurdity, and achieve the similitude of the two angles.

AN INHABITANT OF MAY-FAIR.

#### THE ART OF DESIGNING AND DECORATING.\*

THE ancients were well aware that the perfection of art consists in combining, with the greatest possible effect, the useful with the pleasing—

"Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit dulci;"

and the studies of our artists and artisans should, therefore, be directed to imparting an useful purpose to articles of ornament, and an ornamental character to articles of use. The *Exposition* cannot fail to prove highly suggestive to them on this important subject. Whatever is new to them in the category of the beautiful will at once attract their attention; and on studying the peculiar characteristics of the work, in order to detect the secret by which the effect has been produced, they will, after a series of such observations, easily arrive at the conclusion, that the qualities required in a work which the artist aspires to have ranked in the order of the beautiful are very simple and few—namely, unity of design, symmetry of parts, and harmonious colouring of the whole. Here, he will become master of the entire theory of the science of his art, just as the mathematician becomes master of the entire theory of the science of mechanics, as soon as he becomes thoroughly acquainted with the few and simple laws by which nature controls matter and motion. The progress which either of them, from this point, makes in practical knowledge, will depend upon their studying all that has been achieved or found out in their respective walks, and upon their capacity for improving upon the ideas or enlarging the discoveries of others. In the latter respect, Englishmen have generally shown a remarkable aptitude; and if, as regards the former, our artists and artisans have been deficient, the defect must be attributed, not to any inherent want of application, but to a haughty prejudice against being indebted to foreign rivals for instruction! As well might Herschel have disdained to glean anything from the researches of La Place, or La Place have availed himself of the discoveries of Herschel! They did not act as if they were morbidly sensitive of being thought to owe anything to each other, but as reciprocal lights to each other in their common path, and both equally delighted and served mankind; indeed, amongst the *Men of Science* of different nations, there is no surly independence, no jealousy, no contempt, no fear of each other. This is owing to the constant and friendly intercourse and correspondence which they keep up with each other, by means of their several institutions for the advancement of science; and we have no doubt that, if *Industrial Expositions* also become general, they will soon refuse the same

spirit of philosophic fraternity into the *Men of Manufactures and Arts*.

We have been led into these remarks from perceiving a great deal of the old leaven of jealousy and hatred towards foreigners employed in this country, among different classes of our artisans, from a mistaken notion that the foreign workman is usurping the rights and privileges of an English workman, and not only depriving him of his rights, but also diminishing the amount of his wages, by the keen competition and superior skill which the foreigner, in certain special branches of industry, brings to bear upon him. Nor is this feeling confined exclusively to the workmen; it extends even to the masters, in several branches of trade and manufactures, and operates materially against that fusion of spirit and enterprise which alone can secure the general advancement and well-being of the working classes.

We find the feelings of jealousy and assumed contempt for the foreigner more particularly prevalent amongst decorators, designers, &c.; therefore shall devote a few remarks to this branch of industry, with the view of showing, not only its injustice towards the foreign artisan, but also its folly as regards the interests of the English workman himself. The perfection of the art of designing, as we remarked at the commencement, is to combine a refined taste with unity of purpose; but little regard is frequently paid to this element of the art, so as to render the work produced at once pleasing to the eye and agreeable to the judgment. There is no lack of talent or imagination in England; but the designer too often travels away from his first conception, and wanders into any style which he thinks likely to produce additional effect, instead of pursuing his design truthfully and chastely.

They are the basis and the spirit of the art, and must be carefully studied by every one who would excel in it. The beauty of outline, which consists in correctness and congruity, is the acme of perfection in any drawing of an article of taste. But this is too frequently overlooked from an ambition to display a luxuriance of taste by a superfluity of ornament, which, while it is detrimental to the effect of the work, also renders it more costly than is advantageous even for the artists themselves.

Practice and perseverance are necessary to make a designer, but, after all, designing is a natural gift, in the same way as painters, poets, and composers, are gifted. A youth may be taught to draw, and copy the designs of his instructor, to perfection, but it is a different thing for him to produce an original design; still it is, as we have said, necessary even for a genius to perfect himself in the fundamental principles of his art, and when he has done so, the higher studies in design will become easy to him, and his conceptions will no longer be obscured by that unpleasant *embarras de richesses* which prevents the less accomplished designer from displaying his resources with the best effect.

The mistake of English designers is, that they do not follow out the order or style of design upon which they start. When once they have commenced they do not know when to leave off, but, after having made a good design, persist in encumbering it with fancied improvements, until the first and best idea is completely overlaid. Another misfortune is, that where the combined talents of two artists of different classes are required, they do not study, either by conspiring together to produce a harmonious design of the whole, or by the one adapting his ideas to those of the other, how to produce a *tout-ensemble* which shall at once strike the eye of taste as being perfect for its consistency, without which, though you may produce a stupendous effect, you never can produce a grand one. For instance, the internal appointments and fittings of an apartment should harmonise with its style of decoration; but in this country the upholsterer violates the design of the decorator, who has himself violated the design of the architect. The architect may have erected a mansion in the Gothic style, the decorator gives to the interior an air of the Saracenic, and then the upholsterer fits it up, perhaps, in the quaint style of the Elizabethan era. And to make the matter worse, perhaps neither of the three has strictly followed his own design, but has been prompted by a meretricious ambition of blend-

ing together as many of the leading features of the several styles in his art as possible. Hence, foreigners justly say that true elegance is rarely to be met with in this country.

The chief elements of design are correctness and purity of style. To attain correctness, each object must have the proper proportion assigned to it in the design which its uses and its nature suggest; and everything deserving the title of beautiful must be invested with an outline of definite character; and lastly, whatever style of ornament is commenced upon, that should be strictly adhered to. For instance, the styles of the *Renaissance* and *Louis XIV.* are both very chaste and beautiful, if religiously adhered to. In these cases the ornaments should be kept light, and symmetrically placed; but this is scarcely ever done correctly in this country, through a desire to do more than the styles will admit of, and thus overloading them with ornaments which are out of place. Besides what we have said of the harmony which should be preserved between the architecture, decoration, and furniture of a mansion, the harmony of colours should also be remembered. But this is frequently not the case, for you will find an extravagantly luxurious carpet destroying the whole effect of the other decorations, the pattern being much too large for it, the colours not corresponding in tints with the wall, the chairs quite lost upon it, and the curtains made to look insignificant. All this arises from a want of taste, either in the party who gives the order or in the man of business. Both are culpable in this matter. Monopoliasts, whose only object is to get business, have made great innovations upon all trades of taste; and the passion of our higher classes for foreign productions of former age, bubble, tapestries, &c., have set every manufacturer to work to corrupt what taste we have, while the artist must administer to whatever may be the *penchant* of the employer. Hence the introduction of the *arabesque* into ordinary rooms, which is quite out of character, and destroys the effect of everything which is placed in connection with it. It is adapted, as it was intended, for no other purpose than entrance-halls, vestibules, staircases, &c.; and to apply it to other purposes, merely because it is a foreign style, is ridiculous.

Draughtsmen and designers here should make themselves acquainted with the ideas and styles of foreign artists, who first taught us what variety ornamental style is capable of. To compete with them we must have a true School of Design, for it is not talent, but education, which is wanted to enable our artists to rival, and even outstrip, those of other countries. Those to whom the education of our aspiring artists is confided should be men possessing large views and great knowledge of the several branches of the art, and the education afforded should not be merely general, and therefore superficial, but the utmost care should be bestowed in perfecting the pupils in every particular department of the art for which they may show a special bias and aptitude. It is to be regretted that no such school has been established in this country as yet, although great improvements have been effected within the last ten years in this important branch of education, as Somerset House clearly testifies.

**MUNIFICENCE BY STEALTH.**—Twenty thousand francs in bank notes were lately found in the poor-box of the Hospital at Orleans, to which was joined a paper containing the following lines:—"My intention is that the sum of 20,000 francs be employed in completing the eastern gallery of the great court of the Hotel Dieu d'Orleans."

**RAILROAD TO CALIFORNIA.**—Mr. Benton has introduced into the United States' senate his Pacific railroad bill. A railroad, plank road, and common road for wagons and horses, with a foot path for pedestrians, are to be built from St. Louis to San Francisco by the federal government. Branch roads are to connect with Santa Fé and Oregon. The main road goes straight to the Pacific, and will be 1,600 miles long, with two branches—one to Santa Fé, 300 miles long, and the other to Oregon, 500 miles long. The grant of land is to be about 100 miles wide, and the whole amount of land to be granted for this purpose is about 150,000,000 acres.

\* From "The Wealth of the World in its Workshops," Dunton, London.